REMARKS

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's thorough consideration of the present application. Claims 1-18 are currently pending in the instant application. Claims 1-3, 12 and 14 have been amended. Claims 1, 12, 15 and 16 are independent. Claims 15-18 have been added for the Examiner's consideration. Reconsideration of the present application is earnestly solicited.

Priority

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's acknowledgment of the receipt of the priority documents for the present application.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102/103

Claims 1, 2, 4-10 and 12-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,940,824). Claims 3 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takahashi (U.S. Patent No. 5,940,824) in view of Otto (U.S. Patent No. 6,244,514). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

In light of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Applicant submits that all of the rejections have been obviated and/or rendered moot. The subject matter of claim 3 has been added to independent claims 1 and 12. Therefore, as indicated by the Examiner in the Office Action, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) has been rendered moot. Specifically, the prior art of

record fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the unique combination of elements of claims 1, 12, 15 and 16. Accordingly, this rejection should be withdrawn.

With respect to claims 1 and 12, the Takahashi reference fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the combination of elements of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of "a compression device for compressing image data of said image to produce said compressed image data, wherein said compression device performs normalization of said image data prior to compression of said image data of said image to perform setup of said image data." Accordingly, these rejections should be withdrawn.

In the claimed invention of claims 1 and 12, the normalization of image data prior to its compression is carried out for the purpose of correcting certain fluctuations which may occur when the image data on an image is captured, including the fluctuation in adjustment of light for scanning in the case where an image recorded on a photographic film is photoelectrically read with a scanner. The normalization of the claimed invention is carried out in order to perform setup using a specified value of the compressed image data on an image, e.g., such as its average, maximum or minimum value, as the reference value. More preferably, the claimed invention relies upon the averages of the compressed image data on images being made equal to one another and performing setup of an image or its image data using the equalized average (see page 24, lines 7-9 to page 26, line 4 of the specification).

Accordingly, the normalization of image data prior to its compression is distinctly different from the standardization for a reduction in data volume as described in Takahashi. The Examiner has relied upon Fig. 1, the compression processing unit 15, and col. 14, lines 4-8 of Takahashi to show the features of claims 1 and 12 discussed hereinabove. Applicant respectfully submits that that this interpretation is improper.

As admitted by the Examiner on page 6 of the Office Action, "Takahashi does not specifically teach normalization of the image data prior to compression of said image data." Although the Examiner alleges that one "skilled in the art would have clearly recognized that in the Takahashi system, the data volume can be reduced in data retrieval (col. 14, lines 4-8)," Applicant has shown hereinabove that this reduction in data volume described at col. 14, lines 4-8 of Takahashi is not equivalent to the normalization of image data prior to its compression. Accordingly, the rejections to claims 1 and 12 should be withdrawn.

With respect to claim 15, the Takahashi reference fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the combination of elements of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of "said storage device stores compressed image data of split images in which said image is split into a plurality of regions and wherein said retrieval device performs retrieval of said image using said compressed image data after said compressed image data of said split images in regions which are in a point symmetry relation with each other about the

center of said image are integrated." Accordingly, the rejection based upon the Takahashi reference should be obviated and/or rendered moot.

With respect to claim 16, the Takahashi reference fails to teach or suggest each and every element of the combination of elements of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of "a storage device. . .wherein said storage device stores compressed image data of split images in which said image is split into a plurality of regions;" and "a retrieval device. . .wherein said retrieval device performs retrieval of said image using said compressed image data after said compressed image data of said split images in regions which are in a point symmetry relation with each other about the center of said image are integrated." Accordingly, the rejection based upon the Takahashi reference should be obviated and/or rendered moot.

The Examiner has relied upon col. 7, lines 31-35 to show the limitations of claims 15-16 described hereinabove. Applicant submits that the Examiner's interpretation of the Takahashi reference is improper. For example, in the division of image data into regions of Takahashi (see FIG. 2), image data is divided into four regions, namely the regions of the DC component (36), the low frequency component (37), the intermediate frequency component (38) and the high frequency component (39). In contrast, a two-dimensional image is geometrically divided into smaller two-dimensional areas in the claimed invention. Therefore, the divided regions of Takahashi do not have the geometrical characteristic of point symmetry, and as a consequence, Takahashi

lacks the claimed feature of integrating point-symmetrical areas of the claimed invention of claims 15 and 16. Accordingly, this rejection has been obviated and/or rendered moot.

With respect to dependent claim 4, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the combination of elements of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of "wherein said storage device stores said compressed image data of said image and information of said image under a correspondence therebetween." In the Takahashi reference, "image information" appears to be referring to information for retrieval. In the claimed invention, "image information" is the image data itself that is not used for retrieval, or the image information or image processing condition obtained from image analysis that is not used for retrieval. Therefore, Takahashi fails to teach or suggest the unique features of claim 4.

With respect to dependent claim 8, the prior art of record fails to teach or suggest the combination of elements of the claimed invention, including the limitation(s) of "wherein said retrieval device performs at least one of retrieval by comparing the spatial coefficients of the luminance signal up to a specified order with each other to select objects to be retrieved and thereafter by comparing the spatial coefficients of the color difference signal of the thus selected objects to be retrieved to another specified order with each other, and retrieval by comparing the spatial coefficients of the luminance signal up to a higher order than the previously specified order with each other." The

Examiner relies upon col. 7, lines 43-49 and col. 11, lines 28-42 to show the presence of these features in Takahashi. This interpretation of the Takahashi reference is respectfully traversed. Takahashi does not appear to teach or suggest any limitation on the specific order of retrieval. Specifically, Takahashi does not teach that retrieval is performed initially with luminance signals, then subsequently with color difference signals. Applicant requests clarification of the presence of this feature in the Takahashi reference if the Examiner maintains this rejection in any subsequent communications from the USPTO.

In addition, the Otto reference fails to teach or suggest the shortcomings of the Takahashi reference identified by Applicant hereinabove. Accordingly, the alleged combination fails to establish a proper prima facie case of obviousness and should be withdrawn.

In accordance with the above discussion of the patents relied upon by the Examiner, Applicant respectfully submits that these documents, either in combination together or standing alone, fail to teach or suggest the invention as is set forth by the claims of the instant application.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the claim rejections are respectfully requested. Moreover, Applicant respectfully submits that the instant application is in a condition for allowance.

As to the dependent claims, Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable due to their dependence upon an allowable independent claim, as well as for additional limitations provided by these claims.

CONCLUSION

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but rather to merely show the state-of-the-art, no further comments are necessary with respect thereto.

All the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed and/or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently pending rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the application by this Amendment.

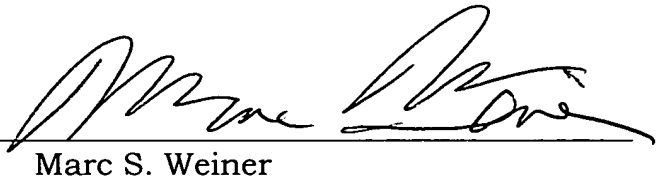
In the event there are any matters remaining in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact Matthew Shanley, Registration No. 47,074 at (703) 205-8000 in the Washington, D.C. area.

Applicants respectfully petition under the provisions of 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) and § 1.17 for a three-month extension of time in which to respond to the Examiner's Office Action. The Extension of Time Fee in the amount of **$930.00** is attached hereto.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 

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Attachment: Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

MARKED-UP VERSION OF AMENDMENTS

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 15-18 have been added.

The claims have been amended as follows:

1. (Amended) A retrieval system for retrieving an image from an image data base, comprising:

a storage device for storing compressed image data of said image, said storage device including the image data base; [and]

a retrieval device for retrieving said image while said compressed image data is in a compressed state; and

a compression device for compressing image data of said image to produce said compressed image data, wherein said compression device performs normalization of said image data prior to compression of said image data of said image to perform setup of said image data.

2. (Amended) The retrieval system according to claim [1] 15, further comprising a compression device for compressing image data of said image to produce said compressed image data.

3. (Amended) The retrieval system according to claim [1] 2, wherein said compression device performs normalization of said image data prior to compression of said image data of said image.

12. (Amended) An image processing apparatus comprising:

an image processing device for subjecting image or image data thereof to image processing;

a setting device for setting said image processing which said image processing device performs in accordance with said image or the image data thereof;

a storage device for storing compressed image data of said image or said image data thereof and information of said image processing to which said image or the image data thereof corresponding to said compressed image data is subjected under a correspondence therebetween; [and]

a retrieval device for retrieving said image stored in said storage device while said compressed image data is in a compressed state to read said information of the image processing corresponding to the image of interest; and

a compression device for compressing image data of said image to produce said compressed image data, wherein said compression device performs normalization of said image data prior to compression of said image data of said image to perform setup of said image data.

14. (Amended) The image processing apparatus according to claim [12] 16, further comprising a compression device for compressing said image data of said image to produce said compressed image data.